

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5693  
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T TEHRAN 1776

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJ: MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS--AND ARAFAT PROPOSAL

1. DURING HIS AUDIENCE WITH THE SHAH AND A SUBSEQUENT CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY FEBRUARY 21, SENATOR STEVENSON DESCRIBED A CONVERSATION HE HAD RECENTLY WITH PLO LEADER ARAFAT IN BEIRUT. HE INTRODUCED THE SUBJECT BY STATING THAT THE STEP BY STEP APPROACH TOWARD A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT SEEMS TO HAVE REACHED A DEAD END AND A WAY MUST BE FOUND TO GET ALL THE CONCERNED PARTIES BACK TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE IN A MULTILATERAL OR INTERNATIONALIZED FORUM. IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT HE ASKED ARAFAT IF ANYTHING COULD BE DONE TO BREAK OUT OF THE CURRENT STALEMATE. ACCORDING TO STEVENSON, ARAFAT SAID THAT BEFORE HE WAS ABLE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE HE MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW HIS PEOPLE. THIS SOMETHING COULD BE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL OF A "FEW KILOMETERS" IN THE GAZA STRIP AND ON THE WEST BANK. ARAFAT ALSO SAID THAT THIS "DISENGAGEMENT" COULD BE SUPERVISED BY THE UN AND THE VACATED TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY UN FORCES RATHER THAN PALESTINAIANS. WHEN STEVENSON NOTED WITH SURPRISE THAT ARAFAT HAD NOT MENTIONED WITHDRAWAL ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND ASKED WHETHER PRESIDENT ASAD WOULD AGREE WITH THE PROPOSAL IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY MOVEMENT ON THE Golan FRONT, ARAFAT CLAIMED THAT HE WOULD.

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STEVENSON TOLD THE SHAH AND KHALATBARY THAT THIS WAS AN

IDEA HE HAD NOT HEARD HERETOFORE AND WONDERED WHETHER IRAN MIGHT BE WILLING TO JOIN WITH THE UNITED STATES IN URGING ISRAEL TO TAKE ARAFAT UP ON HIS PROPOSAL. BOTH WERE SKEPTICAL THAT ASAD WOULD AGREE TO ANY SUCH PROPOSAL AND FURTHER WONDERED WHETHER ARAFAT IS STILL IN FULL CONTROL OF THE PLO AND WHETHER HE WOULD BE ABLE TO CARRY THE PALESTINIANS WITH HIM. THEY ALSO ASKED WHAT THE USG THOUGHT ABOUT THE PROPOSAL. STEVENSON RESPONDED THAT HE HAD ONLY HAD HIS CONVERSATION WITH ARAFAT SEVERAL DAYS AGO ON HIS CURRENT TRIP AND HAD NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS IT WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. NEVERTHELESS, HE KNEW THAT IN GENERAL THE USG WAS ANXIOUS TO BREAK THE CURRENT STALEMATE AND THAT IT WAS EXAMINING A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE OPTIONS.

2. NEITHER THE SHAH NOR KHALATABARY SEEMED INCLINED TO PRESS THIS PROPOSAL ON ISRAEL, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE THEY DID NOT FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ASAD OR ANY OTHER ARAB LEADER MUCH LESS THE PALESTINAIN PEOPLE THEMSELVES. FURTHER, KHALATABARY ARGUED THAT IN MATTERS OF THIS SORT IRAN WAS NOT WELL PLACED TO PRESS A PARTICULAR PROPOSAL ON ONE PARTY OR THE OTHER BECAUSE, HAVING RELATIONS WITH BOTH, IT WAS ALSO SUSPECT TO BOTH. NEVERTHELESS, KHALATABRY DID SAY THAT HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR IRAN TO MAKE INQUIRIES AS TO WHETHER SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE ANY CHANCE AT ALL OF SUCCEEDING WHILE CAREFULLY AVOIDING ANY INDICATION THAT IT WAS A POSITION IRAN WAS IN FACT ADVOCATING.

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## Message Attributes

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